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No. CXXX.

THE MINOR DRAMA.

A

LIVE WOMAN IN THE MINES;

OR,

PIKE COUNTY AHEAD!

A Local Play in Two Acts.

BY "OLD BLOCK."

WITH CAST OF CHARACTERS, STAGE BUSINESS, COSTUMES,
RELATIVE POSITIONS, &c., &c.

NEW YORK:
SAMUEL FRENCH,

122 NASSAU STREET, (UP STAIRS.)

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[Catalogue continued on third page of cover.]

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A Local Play in Two Acts.

BY "OLD BLOCK." *epseud.*

Melano, Alonzo

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

A description of the Costume—Cast of the Characters—Entrances and Exits—
Relative Positions of the Performers on the Stage, and the whole of the
Stage Business.

NEW YORK:

SAMUEL FRENCH,

122 NASSAU STREET, (UP STAIRS.)

PS 1534
II 13 L 5
1857

NOTE.

The plot of this play is founded on fact. The history of John and Mary Wilson is that of hundreds who have come to California—and their misfortunes and ultimate success is a type of what many others have experienced within the author's knowledge.

Pike County Jess is only a type of an open, generous, off-hand, uneducated, south and western man—copied from a character I met in crossing the Plains in '49.

High Betty Martin is a specimen of a back-woods, western Amazonian, such as I have seen, not only in the West, but upon the Plains—who is indomitably persevering, and brave under difficulties, but withal with woman's feelings when difficulty is over.

Old Swamp, the Judge, Stokes, Ned, and Joo were my companions in the mines; and their disposition to make the best of bad circumstances, is a truthful illustration of my messmates. The scene of the petticoat is true in the main, only that the author was the speaker on the occasion. Jones is a veritable character in name, adventures, and vocation. He is at this moment a citizen of San Francisco, and by his own permission I introduce him. His turkey dinner is copied mainly from his own letter to the author.

The other characters are introduced to carry on the plot, but are such as were daily seen in 1850, as well as at the present day.

THE AUTHOR.

CHARACTERS.

PIKE COUNTY JESS, <i>The Poet and Philanthropist.</i>	NED. OLD SWAMP, <i>the Sermonizer.</i>
JOHN WILSON.	DOCTOR.
CASH. } <i>Gamblers.</i>	JONES, <i>the Printer Man.</i>
DICE. }	EXPRESS RIDER,
SLUICE, <i>the Plucked Pigeon.</i>	WATCHMAN.
JUDGE.	POSTMASTER.
STOKES.	CHINAMAN.
JOE.	MINERS.
MARY WILSON, <i>the Live Woman.</i>	HIGH BETTY MARTIN.

Costume.—MODERN AND MINING.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

L. means *First Entrance Left*. R. *First Entrance Right*. S. E. L. *Second Entrance, Left*. S. E. R. *Second Entrance, Right*. U. E. L. *Upper Entrance, Left*. U. E. R. *Upper Entrance, Right*. C. *Centre*, L. C. *Left Centre*. R. C. *Right of Centre*. T. E. L. *Third Entrance Left*. T. E. R. *Third Entrance, Right*. C. D. *Centre Door*. D. R. *Door Right*. D. L. *Door Left*. U. D. L. *Upper Door, Left*. U. D. R. *Upper Door, Right*.

. The reader is supposed to be on the Stage, facing the Audience.

A LIVE WOMAN IN THE MINES.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*J Street in Sacramento. Time—about August, 1850.*

Enter JOHN, R., and MARY, L.

John. [*Embracing her.*] Ah! Mary! Mary! Is it thus we meet again? No hope—no encouragement?

Mary. O, John, I am tired almost to death. I have been walking all day, inquiring for a situation at every respectable house, without success. I offered to do anything: to wash—scrub—in short, to do the most menial service; but every vacancy was filled.

John. How were you received?

Mary. Generally with kindness. Some seemed to pity me, and encourage me with hope; some kindly advised me to go to the Mines, and set up a boarding-house, while others looked coldly on me as a suspicious thing, and rudely answered to go somewhere else, they did not want my services, while I occasionally met one who crushed my heart by base insinuations, which, while it brought the blush of shame to my cheek, excited my indignation, that poverty and misfortune should be a mark for rudeness, and that wealth should be entitled to such license.

John. O that I had been with you then! I too have been unsuccessful. I offered to perform any service, no matter how low, if it was honest. I felt willing to engage in any employment suited to my capacities, but I found every place occupied, from the boot-black to the merchant's clerk; and now, without a dime to buy a crust of bread, or provide a simple lodging for her I love better than my own life, I feel as if all hope had fled, and that here in the land of gold, and amidst the splendor of wealth, we are indeed beggars.

Mary. It is hard, John, but I feel not for myself. When I see your anxious brow, your cheek pale with exertion, scarcely recovered from the debilitating effect of Panama fever, yet struggling manfully to provide something for our subsistence, I forget my own weakness, my own helplessness, and gather fresh courage, and hope against hope, and feel from my very soul that we must, we will yet succeed.

John. O, Mary, Mary, why would you leave the comforts of your father's house to share my misery? When our hopes were blasted by the dubious turns of mercantile speculations; when it became necessary for me to try my fortune again in the world, why should you cling to me in the darkest hour, share the perils of the sea, risk the sickness of the tropics, and now be reduced to beggary by my misfortunes? O, Mary, Mary, why did you not let me suffer and die alone?

Mary. You little know the strength of woman's love. Where her heart is, there is her heaven on earth. I will never leave you till death throws its dark mantle round me; "wither thou goest I will go, thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." [*With fervor.*]

John. [*Clasping her in his arms passionately.*] You are my guardian spirit—my guiding star. As we have lived together, so will we die. Faint and weary as I am, your words have given me new courage, and with the morning sun we will make one more effort. Surely our countrymen will not let us starve!

Mary. No; a crust will not be refused to honest poverty, and I feel at this moment as if our darkest days had come, and a light must soon glimmer on us. Talk not of death, John, for, till the breath is out of the body, nobody in California dies. Courage then for another effort—aye, another and another, if need be—we will succeed.

John. I never dreamed that you had such resolution.

Mary. And I never knew that I had it till necessity prompted it. I am only like thousands of others who have come to California; who knew not their own strength till occasion developed it.

John. And now for a shelter to pass the night in. If we can only find an empty shed—a vacant tent——

[*Crosses, L.*]

Mary. And if not, the blue vault of heaven beneath the spreading canopy of some friendly oak, with the twinkling stars for lamps will suffice.

John. O, Mary! has it come to this?

Mary. Hush! my husband. [*They retire up the stage as if in search of a lodging-place.*]

Enter CASH and DICE, L.

Cash. How much did you pluck that goose?

Dice. A cool five thousand.

Cash. Five thousand! you are in capital luck. How did you come it over the greenhorn so nicely?

Dice. Why, the moment he came in I had my eye on him. I saw he was a green 'un, just from the Mines, and therefore proper game. I carelessly began talking with him, and found out that he was on his way home; told me a long yarn about his father and mother; old man was crippled, and the old woman supported the family by washing, and all that nonsense; and how he should surprise them when he got home, and that they shouldn't work any more, and all that sort of thing; let out that he had dug a pile by hard labor, and had the money in his belt. Well, of course I rejoiced with him, commended him as a dutiful son, and to show him my appreciation of so much virtue, I insisted on his drinking with me.

Cash. Ha! ha! ha! You're a perfect philanthropist—well:

Dice. At first he rather backed water, but I would take no denial, and I finally succeeded in getting the first dose down him. A little while after, not to be mean, he offered to treat me.

Cash. Of course you was dry.

Dice. Dry as a contribution box. I winked at Tim, so he made Sluice Forks' smash good and strong, and somehow forgot to put any liquor in mine.

Cash. What monstrous partiality!

Dice. Directly he began to feel the second dose, and grew friendly and confidential. Well, I offered to show him around among the girls, in the evening, with all the sights in town, and at the same time cautioned him against falling into bad hands, for he might be swindled or robbed by strangers.

Cash. Good fatherly adviser—ha! ha! ha!

Dice. Yes, and he grew grateful fast, for he insisted on my drinking with him.

Cash. Ah! that hurt your feelings.

Dice. I told him I seldom drank anything—

Cash. Only when you could get it, I s'pose?

Dice. As he would take no denial I—hem!—reluctantly consented, and nodded to Tim, who flavored his glass with morphine, and mine, particularly, with cold water.

Cash. You're a practical illustration of a California temperance society.

Dice. It was'nt long before he was the richest man in California, and a d——d sight the smartest. Of course he was, so I invited him up to the table to see the boys play. He asked me if I ever played. I told him I seldom staked anything, but what I did I was sure to win, so I threw a dollar on the red.

Cash. And won, of course.

Dice. Of course. And then I proposed that he should try it. He demurred some, but I told him a dollar was nothing—if he lost I would share the loss—so he finally let a dollar slip on the red.

Cash. And won, of course.

Dice. To be sure; our Jake knows what he's about. Sluice Box was absolutely surprised when two dollars were pushed back to him. He then doubled his stakes, and went on winning till he thought he had Fortune by the wings, when suddenly his luck changed, and he began to lose, and became excited. It was my treat now, and that settled the matter, for he swore he would not leave the table till he had won the money back. So he staked his pile, and we fleeced him out of every dime, and a happier man than Sluice Box is at this moment does not exist.

Cash. How, at being robbed?

Dice. Not that exactly; but, by the time his money was gone, he was so beastly drunk that Tim kicked him out of the round tent into the gutter, where he now lays fast asleep, getting ready for another trip to the Mines, instead of helping his mother wash at home, and plastering up his father's sore shins.

Cash. Ha! ha! ha! the fools are not all dead. We'll go it while we're young. [*Sings.*] "O, Californy, the land for me."

Dice. Stay! look there; who are they? [*Pointing to JOHN and MARY in the back ground.*]

Cash. A devilish fine woman! I say, Dice, there's game; I'm in.

Dice. Wonder who that feller is with her?

Cash. O, some fool of a husband, brother or lover. What's the difference? it's game, and we'll come down on the bank and take our chances.

Dice. Good; I go halves. [*JOHN and MARY advance, L.*]

Cash. Good evening. You are strangers? [*Inquiringly.*]

John. But recently arrived, sir.

Dice. Eh! looking for lodgings, perhaps?

John. Rather in search of employment. Lodgings, however, are desirable at this hour.

Cash. What business do you wish to engage in?

John. Any that is honorable. The truth is, my means are rather limited at present, and although I was bred a merchant, I am not above earning an honest living in any profitable way.

Dice. And the lady?

John. Is my wife, sir.

Cash. Eh! oh! ah! I say, Mr. Dice, you want a clerk, and my family will afford a fine asylum for the lady.

Dice. Exactly. I think you are just the man I want; good salary, no reference needed.

Mary. You are very kind, gentlemen. Certainly this is unexpected.

Cash. Tut! nothing for California; and—hark ye—there is something in a pretty face and bright eye that—

Mary. Sir! [*With reserve.*]

Cash. O, nothing, nothing—we make bargains in a hurry in Sacramento.

Dice. Well, sir—will you go with me? My business is urgent—I've no time to waste.

John. Please give me your address; I will call in the morning.

Dice. Morning? No, my business is in the evening. Go with me now. Mr. Cash, take the lady to your family—to *your family*, Mr. Cash; I will conduct the gentlemen to my office. Come, sir, [*to JOHN,*] my office is in the Round Tent.

Cash. Madam, I will conduct you.

John. [*Aside to Mary.*] Mary, I don't half like these men; there is something strange in their manner.

Mary. And I don't like it at all. I will not go without you.

Cash. Come with me, Madam—I have no time to spare.

[*Takes her rudely by the arm.*]

Mary. Let me go, sir! I shall not go without my husband.

Dice. He's engaged with me. Come, sir, this way!

[*Endeavors to pull him along.*]

Cash. No ceremony in California. I shall introduce you to my family, and [*aside to her,*] if a thousand dollars will make you happy, I'm your man, my dear.

Mary. [*Struggles as he attempts to pull her along.*] Back, sir—you are a villain.

John. [*Struggles to protect MARY.*] Stand off, sir! Villain, unhand my wife.

Dice. Go it, Cash—now's your time. Be quiet, fool, [*to John,*] it's a cool thousand; you'll never make money faster nor easier.

[*MARY screams as CASH endeavors to force her off; JOHN struggles to reach her, but is overthrown by DICE, who suddenly draws a pistol, and presents at him.*

Enter PIKE, running, L. U. E.

Pike. Hillo, mister! whar ye gwine too with that ar' live woman? Open yer traps, I say, and let 'er go! no jumping another man's claim in these diggins. You won't?

[*Knocks CASH down and releases MARY.*

Pike. What a gang on em! I say, you varmint, pick up yer tools, and vamos these diggins. Don't undertake to jump a claim that's already prospected. [*Collars DICE and forces him off—CASH gets up and sneaks off.*] Thar, strangers, is a specimen of Pike county justice, and ef I catch you in these diggins again, I'll grease yer ears and swaller you whole.

[*To them as CASH goes off, L.*

John. (R.) My good fellow, we are under infinite obligations to you.

Mary. (C.) Those villians tried to entrap us.

Pike. Tried to trap you, did they? Set their trap wrong there, for the spring caught their own fingers, anyhow. Who are ye? Whar d'ye come from? Whar ar ye gwine to? What ye doin here, strangers?

Mary. We have just come to California; my husband was sick on the Isthmus; we lost all our money; we have both been trying to get work, but without success. We do not know what to do, or where to go, and were wandering up and down in search of a shelter when those villians assailed us, and you came to our rescue.

Pike. I hope I may never strike a lead ef you ar'nt the prettiest specimen of a live woman I've seen in Californy. Don't get mad; I'm only a rough miner, but my mother was a woman, my sister is a woman, Caroline Betsey is a woman, and the last letter she got writ she said she was comin to Californy on her own hook. Is that chap your husband?

Mary. Yes.

Pike. Wal, old feller, I kind o' have a sneakin for you, jist for your gall's sake. Thar's my fist on it; what may I call your name, stranger?

John. John Wilson, my good fellow.

Pike. Wal, John Wilson, you're strapped, are you?

John. It is too true; my cash account is rather easily balanced, just now.

Pike. Don't know whar to roost, eh?

John. Indeed I do not.

Pike. Well, I live up in the mountains, where you have to dodge to

keep out of the way of sunrise; so jist go with me to Stringtown, and set up a boarding-house, or a store, with your gall thar—you'd make money.

John. I really appreciate your kindness, but I have neither the means to get there, nor money to begin with when I am there.

Pike. Pshaw! I've got the dust. Say you'll go, and I'll plank down all you want till you can pay. Your gall will keep you honest. I drive three mules and a jackass; come down for supplies for the boys; take the back track to-morrow. Gall, what's yer name?

Mary. Mary Wilson, sir. Ha! ha! something of an original.

[To JOHN.]

Pike. Wal, Mary Wilson, my gall's name is Carolina Betsey, known at home as High Betty Martin. What do you say—will you go to Stringtown and prospect? shan't cost you a dime; Old Swamp is thar, and he'll be a father to you, so will I, and so will all the boys.

Mary. John!

John. Mary!

Mary. Yes, my friend, we will go with you, and thank heaven for the rough diamond it has thrown in our path.

Pike. Whoora! for a live woman in the mines. What'll the boys say? they'll peel out o' their skins for joy. A live female woman in the mines! wake snakes and dead niggers! turnpikes and railroads come next and steam engines! whoora for Pike county! wheat bread and chicken fixins now—hoe cakes and slapjacks be d——d—whoora! I say. Come to my tent under the oak tree in J street, and turn in. By day-light I'll start three mules and a jackass, a greenhorn and a live woman for Stringtown. Injins and grizzlies clar the track, or a young airthquake will swaller you. Don't be skeered, gal—don't get mad, John; I mean it all right, but it all comes out tail eend foremost. A live woman in the mines! fol lol de lol—lol lol de ral.

[*Exeunt, L.*]

SCENE II.—*Sacramento, in front of the Round Tent, J Street.*
Time—morning. SLUCE discovered lying asleep in the gutter.

Enter WATCHMAN, L.

Watch. These eternal broils among rowdies, these infernal cases of drunk slightlyally, and drunk particularly, with the pleasant pastime of dirking, shooting, grabbing, and stealing are enough to try the patience of any Christian watchman this side of Hangtown. I would resign if it was't for the chances, now and then, of plucking a part-ridge, in the way of hush money. That pays slightlyally; better, too, than city scrip or corporation notes. It doesn't do to be too hard on a man who has plenty of money. No, no, he would'nt look well in the station-house; and then I may as well take a good fee for letting them off, as to let the lawyers and judges get it all for letting them off under color of law—besides it saves time. Poor devils who have no money, and can't pay, why, they're of no use to anybody, and in the station-house they're removed from temptation, and the county settles their bills. Think I won't resign yet awhile. [*Discovers SLUCE.*] Ah! here's a subject of contemplation. [*Watches him.*]

Sluice. [*Starting from sleep.*] I go it on the red—down—yes I'm down—shove it over here, rake her up, old fel—Dice, one brandy smash—two jarvies and a cocktail, plenty of sugar, boy. [*Rubs his eyes.*] Eh! where am I? O, I thought this was Sacramento. What a dream I had. Come boys, it's day-light, time to go to work; Bill, I'll tend the rocker to-day—you pick and I'll wash. [*Getting awake.*] Why, this aint the Mines. Where have I got to? I thought I was on my claim. [*Looks about.*] Why, this is Sacramento. I'm in Sacramento or Sacramento is in me, I don't exactly know which.

Watch. Should'nt be surprised if it was a leetle of both, my young covey. Oblivious, slightly. [*Aside.*]

Sluice. [*Gets up.*] Is this me—or somebody else? I had a hat; there's none on my head. [*Feeling for it.*] My coat had a tail to it; there's none on this. I had a pair of boots on; somebody's leg has only one on. Somebody has made a devil of a mistake, somehow. I don't remember going to bed; I don't remember any bed going to me. I—I—I—[*feels around him.*] Where's my money? where's my—my dust—my—my—five—thousand—dollars that I had last night?

[*Much alarmed.*]

Watch. [*Aside.*] Five thousand dollars! Wonder if the gentleman has it about him now. If he has'nt I'll take the loafer to the station-house.

Sluice. [*In alarm.*] It's gone—it's gone—taint here! My money's gone—I've been robbed! [*Frantically.*] My dust is gone! [*Recollecting.*] O, I know—I remember—I was drunk—I played—I—I— O, mother! mother! what have I done? O, father! Murder! murder! [*shouts*] help! help! thieves! robbers!

Watch. Hello! what's all this fuss about, youngster? Be quiet, will you?

Sluice. I've been robbed! I've lost my money! every dime gone!

Watch. Why then, you are a very poor devil.

Sluice. I had started for home; I had made my pile; I only got into town yesterday; I went into the round tent; they took me in.

Watch. You was a stranger, I suppose.

Sluice. They got me drunk—made me play. The gamblers have got it all—I can't go home. O, mother! mother!—O, father! what will you do now? I can never look you in the face again. I want to die—I aint fit to live!

[*Bursts into tears.*]

Watch. Look here, my lark, I've seen hundreds in the same fix. You are just the goose for the gamblers to pluck; they're always on the watch for greenhorns from the Mines, and have the little jokers always ready. If you had'nt went into the gambling house you would'nt have been tempted; if you had'nt drank you would not have been drunk; if you had not got drunk you would not have played; if you had not played you would not have lost your money. Do you understand?

Sluice. [*Agonized.*] Take me to a tree and hang me forty feet high; I aint fit to live—I want to die.

Watch. No; I don't think you are worth hanging, so I'll arrest you, and take you to the station-house. A few days in the prison brig or

the chain gang for being uproarious may bring you to your senses. I'll do what I can legally to comfort you.

Enter BETSEY, L., in men's boots, with a large ox whip in her hand.

Betsey. Mister, whar's the post-office?

Watch. Corner K and Third streets.

Betsey. Anan!

Watch. Corner K and Third streets, madam.

Betsey. How far away's that from Sacramento?

Watch. Why, that's Sacramento, madam.

Betsey. You don't go for to say them places are in Sacramento. Its the post-office I want. Got sich a thing here? a place whar letters is got out of.

Watch. I believe here's another case of drunk. Where do you hail from, madam?

Betsey. I don't neither hail, rain, or snow, mister. I want to find the post-office, I do, for I expect thar's a letter from Jess.

Watch. Well, you must have dropped down from somewhere. The post-office is on the corner of K and Third streets.

Betsey. Hav'nt you got a guide book? I had one coming across the Plains, but I threw it away at Hangtown. It was only a Mormon guide, printed at Salt Lake City, and didn't go only to Hangtown. Folks said the trail was plain from thar to Sac City.

Watch. Ha! ha! you don't need a guide book to go through our streets. Just go through Second street to K, then turn up K to Third, and there is the post office on the left.*

Betsey. [*Addressing SLUICE.*] Young man, you look as if you'd jist crossed the Plains, and had larnt something. Won't you be my guide to the post-office?

Sluice. Hum! Yes, I crossed the Plains in '49, but I never learned anything thing till last night, in Sacramento. I know more now than I wish I did.

[*Groans.*]

Betsey. Well, show me the way; I'm a stranger in town.

Sluice. They're bound to take you in, then. But I'll show you the way to the post-office-first, and die afterwards.

Watch. Stay, young man, you're my prisoner.

Sluice. Your prisoner—what for?

Betsey. What's he done, mister?

Watch. He got drunk last night, and slept in the street; but the worst is, he lost all his money, and that is crime enough to commit any man. Didnt play his cards well.

Betsey. Ar that a fact? Was yer fool enough to gamble?

Sluice. Alas! it is too true. I had made a pile, started for home, got into bad company, and like a fool, indeed, lost it all and can't go home. I want to die—I aint fit to live.

Betsey. Young man, you ar a fool—you was a fool to gamble, but you ar a bigger fool to cry when the egg is broke. When you was on the Plains, what did you do when your gun missed fire at a buffalo—sit down and cry over it?

* The post-office was there in 1850.

Sluice. No, I picked the priming and tried it again. Any man would do that.

Betsey. Did yer cry because yer lost the buffalo?

Sluice. No, I was ready for the next and blazed away.

Betsey. Right! so don't be a fool, but once in Californy. Pick your priming, put on another cap, go to the Mines, and blaze away for another pile. You're only in a slough—dig out and keep out.

Watch. She's a true California woman, grit to the back bone.

Sluice. She gives my heart ease. Perhaps I can make my pile again; there's hope, anyhow, and I'll try.

Betsey. Mr. Constable, don't be hard on the man. What may I call your name, mister?

Sluice. It used to be Bill Sluice when I was at home—taint much of anything now.

Betsey. Well Mr. Constable, don't come it too savage on a broken Sluice. Let me have him; Uncle Jo is sick in my wagon, and I'm tired driving. He don't play cards any more if my eye is on him. Let him go, I'll take care of him.

Watch. Ha! ha! ha! Ah! madam, there's no resisting your insinuating manners. I never could resist the glance of the fair sex. Go, young man, and beware of round tents and gambling gentlemen. Can't make anything out of him, anyhow. [*Aside, and exit, R.*]

Betsey. Well, Sluice, will you go with me?

Sluice. Yes, I'll go anywhere—to the devil, if you will, so that I can hide from myself.

Betsey. Well, take my whip, and show me the way to the post-office. Up Second street, down Third street, through B street, across Q street. I wish I had a spellin book—I disremember all the letters.

Sluice. [*Leading.*] This is the way to the round tent—eh! I mean to the post-office. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*K Street, corner Third.*

Enter SLUICE and BETSEY.

Sluice. There's the post-office.

Betsey. Whar?

Sluice. There! don't you see the sign?

Betsey. What, that little painted board with black letters?

Sluice. Yes, that's the sign.

Betsey. Humph! a mighty little sign for sich a big house. Taint a quarter as big as the sign on the starn of a Missouri steamboat, nor half so pretty. What does it spell?

Sluice. Post-office.

Betsey. Whar's the figger-head?

Sluice. I don't think they have one any more than I have; if they have they've served it as the gamblers did me—took it in.

Betsey. Wal, rap at the door. [*He raps gently two or three times, and no response.*] Lord! Sluice, sich raps would'nt wake a snake under a sage bush. Give me the gad and stand from under. [*Raps furiously.*] Hello! the post-office.

Postmaster. [*Puts his head out of the window—his night cap on.*] Who's there, making all that noise?

Betsey. Ha! ha! ha! I thought I'd raise a figure-head.

Postmaster. What do you want at this time in the morning?

Betsey. Are you the post-office, mister?

Postmaster. I am the postmaster, madam. What do you want?

Betsey. I want my letter—and be quick about it—I'm in a hurry.

Postmaster. Go to the devil.

Betsey. I shan't do no sich thing. Give me my letter, and keep your sauce for them as wants it. I don't.

Postmaster. Office opens at eight o'clock—come then. [*Shuts the window.*]

Betsey. Wal, ef that don't beat a black wolf for impudence! the varmint shows his teeth in your very face. Eight o'clock! humph! by that time we'd be more'n eight miles out of town. Now, my letter I will have; so thar! I'll have that figger-head out agin, or know the reason why. [*Raps furiously.*] Come out o' yer hole, you old badger, or I'll pen you up so you can't get out.

Postmaster. [*Opening the window.*] Didnt I tell you to come at eight o'clock?

Betsey. And didnt I tell you to get my letter now? You don't sleep another wink till you give me my letter.

Postmaster. How do you know you have one? [*Tartly.*]

Betsey. Wal, I don't, but I ought to have one. Look and see.

Postmaster. Where on earth do you come from?

Betsey. Didnt I come all the way from Pike county, across the Plains. Didnt uncle Joe get sick on the Desert, and didnt I drive the team in? Didnt I stand guard agin the Indians? Didnt I—Do you see this pretty plaything? [*Suddenly draws a pistol and presents it.*] Shall I take a lock of yer hair off your figure-head, like I did the scalp lock from a digger on the Humboldt? Say, will you give me my letter—yes or no?

Postmaster. I'll do anything to get rid of you. What's your name?

Betsey. Caroline Elizabeth Martin, commonly know as High Betty Martin, in the Settlements. You'll see it on the letter if you can read hand write. Will you look?

Postmaster. Yes, yes—I'll look.

[*Disappears.*]

Betsey. Thar, Sluice, do you see that? Ef you will do a thing you will if you only will. You see that some things can be done as well as others, and there's no use to cry for being a fool onset in a while.

Sluice. You have taught me a lesson I shan't forget. I'll go to the Mines and be a man again.

Postmaster. [*Opens the window and hands out a letter.*] Here, Bedlam.

[*Retires.*]

Betsey. I know'd it! I know'd it! Jess is true as a percussion—a snap and a boo! bang! Thar, Sluice, read it to me. I don't know much about dictionary larnin; we hoed corn and pulled flax, in the Settlements—we did.

Sluice. [*Opens the letter and reads.*] "Dear Carolina Betsey:—I take my pick in hand—I mean my pen—and hope you ar enjoying

the same blessing. My stake is stuck at Stringtown, on Feather River. Beef is four bits a pound, and seace at that. Hard bread and hard work is plenty sometimes, but difficult to get. I drive three mules and a jackass, and slapjacks and molasses is our common doins; but corn dodgers and hoe cake and possum fat can't be got no how. Take the trail to Stringtown, and don't stop at Plumbug, for the diggers is poor thar.

"My pen is poor, my ink is pale,
One of my mules has lost his tail.—Bit of by a grizzly.
"Respectfully yours,

JESSY JENKINS,

Known here as PIKE COUNTY JESS."

Betsey. Wal, I declar! Jess always was a scholard—he licked the schoolmaster onc'est—and then he writes so sentimental like, so poetic—Stringtown, Feather River—three mules and a jackass—thar's whar I'm gwine. Come along, Sluice. Whoa haw! Gee up, Berry!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—*Stringtown Hill.—Wild and romantic high Mountains around, and in the distance, with deep ravines. A tent is discovered, closed.—PIKE is seen lying outside, in his blankets.*

Pike. [*Rousing up from sleep.*] Cock-a-doodle-doo-oo-oo! [*crow-ing.*] The lizards are crawlin out, and it's time for me to crawl out too. The gal and her man seem to sleep—I'll let 'em snooze till I get my mules up.

Enter MARY, from the tent.

Eh, what! rolled out so airy? Did you stand guard all night, gal?

Mary. Good morning, Pike. No, I slept soundly; the ground seemed as soft as a bed of down, and oh! such sweet dreams!

Pike. All in use, all in use, only get used to it. Feather beds are only a vexation—in fact, they're only modern inventions to make people lazy—and I'll marry no gal who sleeps on one; she'd want me to git up and get breakfast for her. Eh! here's another prairie dog crawling out of his hole—

Enter JOHN.

I'll warrant the red ants drove him from his nest.

John. (R.) No, I never slept better, and I begin to like a mountain life. I turned out to help you pack the mules.

Pike. (C.) No, no, you tried that yesterday, and what work you made of it. Pack turned, your gal rolled down hill, mule rolled after her; pots, pans, and crockery smashed up, and if you had'nt moved your boots, pretty freely you'd have been smashed too.

Mary. (L.) For heaven's sake, John, don't pack my mule again, if you have any regard for me. I think something of my own bones yet.

Pike. The fact ar thar's about as much riggin about a mule to secure a cargo as there is about a clipper. You don't know how to

trim your load. and ef you don't trim right, and tighten right, your cargo will be turning somersets, as your gal did yesterday, worse nor a circus rider. No greenhorn knows the quirks and flumadiddles of an aparaho.

John. Ha! ha! I hope you don't consider me a greenhorn by this time.

Mary. I do, John, of the greenest kind.

Pike. Thar! the gal gin my sentiments exactly. All you are fit for is to hippah mula. Whar did your wife go to comin over Bidwell ridge? humph! took lodgings in a clump of mansinieto bushes. You followed like a ten-pin ball, and Short-Tail came within an ace of making a ten-strike after you; and the rattling of frying-pans and coffee-pots was worse than the gongs of a Chinese theatre.

Mary. It was a Providential escape, however.

Pike. I don't think Providence had anything to do with it. It was all owing to John's miserable packin. Short-Tail is a varmint that never tempts Providence, nohow; I've driv him a year, and never knew the animal to stampede, lay down, or dodge in the bushes before, and I think it was all because a greenhorn packed him, and a live woman rid him.

John. It is possible, but I won't be a greenhorn long, ha! ha! Well, where are we, Pike?

Pike. On the pinnacle of Stringtown Hill. That gulch that daylight does'n't shine into is whar the South Fork of Feather flows. To get to it you've got to roll and tumble about a mile down into the bowels of the airth, and when you get to the bottom, you can hear the tinkers at work on the other side. If it yas'nt for the ravines and side gulches the quickest way to get down would be to roll; but as it is, you'd be squashed into a jelly by going it on the perpendicular over the crags; so we have to go it zigzag, like a water snake, till we fetch up on the first bench for a breathin spell.

Mary. How in the world are we to get to the bottom of such a gulf?

Pike. Thar's only one way that I knows on.

Mary. How is that?

Pike. Lend me your petticoat.

Mary. My petticoat? gracious!

John. A petticoat, Pike—you're jesting.

Pike. A petticoat—I want to borrow a petticoat—I do.

Mary. To get me down the hill?

Pike. Sartain.

John. Explain.

Pike. Why, a public officer must always have his vouchers, and I, being commissary and wagon master, must have mine. I can't get a live woman, three mules and a jackass into camp at onest—no human could do it down sich a hill. The boys in the cabin must be short of feed, and they shan't go hungry; so the mules must go with the provisions fust, and you must wait till the next load. Now, if I go into camp and tell the boys I've got a live female woman as part cargo, they'll think I'm drunk or crazy, and won't believe a word—but if I show the papers, with a clear bill of health, they'll acknowledge the corn, and tote you in.

Mary. Ha! ha! Well, if I can't reach the diggins without a passport, you shall have it. [*Goes into the tent and brings out a petticoat.*] Here it is, and I hope they'll believe the book.

Pike. All O K. Now make yourselves comfortable till I bring up pay dirt. [*Goes out, and is heard driving his mules.*] Get up, Mula! ah, Short-Tail! huppah! Mula—arriva! arrea, Jacky. Huppah! you devils! huppah! [*Exeunt, L.*]

SCENE V.—*The Hill, lower down.* JONES discovered clinging to a tree.

Jones. [*Solo.*] Here I am, brought up all standing, with a round turn at that. If this is'n't the cussedest hill in all Californy! I don't know which end up I came down. If it had'n't been for this pine, the Lord only knows where I should have went to. I'll hold on to the roots and take an observation. [*Sits down.*] I wonder where this trail leads to—wonder if there is anything to eat at the bottom of the gulch—wonder if I shall live to get there? O, my stomach! um! [*Groans.*] What would I give to see a water cart coming down the hill, loaded with bread, bacon, and brandy cocktails, and smash up against this tree! O, Jones, you won't be Jones much longer. O, my stomach!

[*Groans.*]

Pike. [*Outside, R. U. E.*] Stop that mule! stop that mule! d—n her! don't you see Short-Tail going over the rocks? [*Rushes in.*] Why the d—l didn't you stop that infarnel varmint?

Jones. [*Lugubriously.*] Humph! It was all I could do to stop myself; and if it had'n't been for this tree, my carcass would'n't have stopped rolling for the next generation.

[*Groans.*]

Pike. It's the first time I ever know'd Short-Tail to stampede; and its all owin to bein rid by a woman. I believe, in my soul, that woman will make a stampede among all the mules and asses in the diggins.

Jones. Stranger, you hav'nt got such a thing as a-biscuit about ye, have ye? I'm so hungry that I could eat a young digger, and wash it down with about a gallon of brandy, and three of the biggest dams on the Yuba.

Pike. Why, who ar you—what ar you prospecting here for?

Jones. My name is Jones, and I've stuck my stake here because I can't stick it anywhere else?

Pike. Jones—I've heard that name before. Any relation of Sam Jones, the fisherman, who fished for clams off Sandy Hook?

Jones. No, I don't belong to that family, though I've been going it hook and line for the last three years.

Pike. Maybe you're John Jones, stranger?

Jones. Nary time—he was hung, in company with John Brown and John Smith, at Nevada.

Pike. Wal, who the d—l ar you, anyhow?

Jones. My name's Bill Jones; called for short William E. Jones, Esq., type-setter by profession and roller by practice, for I rolled from the top of this hill till I brought up against this tree.

Pike. O! a printer man, ar ye? Goin to establish a paper in the diggins?

Jones. Well, I've had 'a press for the last forty-eight hours. My form is about *locked up*, and my leader, I think will be an obituary, with an epitaph on the death of the late editor, William E. Jones, Esq. Humph! I'm about knocked into pi—I wish a pie was knocked into me.

[*Groans.*]

Pike. I'm glad to see you, old fellow. Thar's a good opening for a paper at Stringtown, and I always patronize a paper. What will it be—the Stringtown Gazette?

Jones. Yes, and I shall gazette my own death and burial in the maus of the Cayotes, I reckon. Hav'nt you got the least slice of pork, and a handful of dried beans about you? I hav'nt ate a mouthful for three days, and I'm as hungry as a printer's devil.

Pike. What! hav'nt ate for three days? why, you are famishing. Hold on till I overhaul "Short-Tail." Why, I'll divide the last biscuit with you, and give you the biggest half. [*Runs out and brings in a pack.*] Here, here, old fellow, here's liquor, here's bacon, here's bread—pitch in, pitch in—thar's beans, thar's cold slapjacks, thar's—thar's—pitch in—no surface diggins, lay hold, and go to the bed rock.

Jones. [*Laughs deliriously.*] Ha! ha! ha! The water cart's come. I say, waiter, a broiled chicken, with butter gravy—don't be particular—cook the whole of her, coop, feathers and all. [*Seizes a bottle.*] Gentlemen, your health—ha! ha! ha! [*Drinks and eats.*] Do you know what I think?

Pike. Poh! how should I?

Jones. Well, I think that Noah never had a sweeter piece of bacon in the ark than this. Hogs are delicious animals, aint they?

Pike. Judging by some speciments I've seen, I think they're rather voracious. All right, all right—a streak of luck for you, Bill Jones. Now tell me how you got in close quarters.

Jones. Why, you see—[*drinks*—your health—I like good manners next to good fare. I had a claim in Jackass Gulch, but it got so d—d poor it didn't pay but an ounce a day, and I could'nt stand that, and I determined to find better diggins. I heard they were taking out fifty dollars to a man on Humbug Flat, so Jim Simmons, from Whiskey Bar, and Sam Slope, from Shirt Tail Canon, come along, and we agreed to go prospecting together. We loaded a mule with provisions, and struck across the South Fork of Yuba in search of Humbug, and I've found it to a dead certainty.

Pike. Wal?

Jones. Towards evening of the second day, we halted on a little branch. The boys were gathering wood to build a fire, and I was about unpacking the mule, when an almighty grizzly, with two cubs, rushed out of the chapparel, and made at us with a mouth open seventeen miles wide. It was devil take the hindmost with us; the boys broke for the tall timber; I climbed a tree, while our mule took a stampede as if seven devils was on her trail.

Pike. Wal, that was funny. Ha! ha! ha! How did you go it on a swinging limb?

Jones. Why, old griz seemed to think my flesh the sweetest, and tried to climb after me, to get a taste of my toe nails, but the tree was too small, and she couldn't get up.

Pike. Ha! ha! Why didn't you come down?

Jones. Why, I thought if she would let me alone, I would her, and more particularly as the boys had run off with the rifles, and my pistol had no cap on. Well, we sat and grinned at each other for about an hour, and I out-grinned her—she got ashamed of herself, and concluded to go somewhere else for a supper.

Pike. What became of the boys?

Jones. D——d if I know. As soon as I thought it would answer, I slid down and hunted about for the mule and shouted for the boys; but they were gone, hook and line, so I wandered about till midnight, when I turned in all alone, without a blanket or a biscuit—but it wasn't long before I found myself in a settlement.

Pike. What, when you was all alone?

Jones. Yes, for I found that in the dark I had laid down on a nest of red ants, and in ten minutes I wished myself in the mouth of the old bear, just for a change.

Pike. Why, yes, that was murder by inches, without benefit of a rope.

Jones. When daylight came, I found I wasn't anywhere, with all the world before me. I was teetotally lost, and all I could do, I couldn't find myself; so I kept going on for three days, when I struck this trail, and I knew it would bring me out somewhere, if I could only hold on—and sure enough, it brought me up with a side winder against this tree, and if you hadn't come along I should have gone to quad, and my *composing stick* filled with *dead lines* and a *dash*.

Pike. Wal, Bill Jones, your're on the right trail, now; a few more rolls will bring you to our cabin right side up.

Jones. I'm fond of rolls, but I like 'em hot and well buttered, best.

Pike. The boys will be glad to see you. We'll set you up, and all take your paper. Plenty of contributors in the diggins, too—in fact, you needn't write any thing yourself. Thar's Old Swamp great on sarmons—can go it like a cart-horse. The Judge is a tall coon on law; Stokes is a ra'al wiggler on polotics, and can bray a speech like a jackass; and I'm a riproarer on poetry.

Jones. You a poet?

Pike. You may lay your life on that! Never read my poem on my true love, did you?

Jones. No.

Pike. I reckon not—the printer man at Sacramento wouldn't print it—didn't 'preciate genius; but you shall print it, and we'll sell it at two bits a copy and divide the profits, old fel. O, its capital.

“O, Carolina Betsy's yaller hair
Has laid my heart and innards bare.” [Reciting.]

Jones. There, there—take a drink, and let the rest go till we get to the bottom of the hill. There is genuine poetry in your heart, if there is not in your poem, and I'll set *you* up in capitals, if I don't your *rhymes*.

Pike. Well, help me straighten up Short Tall, who's lodged in the mansinieto's, and we'll straighten the pome when your press gets to grinding.

Jones. Go ahead. For once in my life I'm in luck. [Exeunt.]

SCENE VI.—*Inside of a miner's cabin ; group of miners variously engaged—some mending clothes, some cooking, some washing clothes at the wash-tub, some lying in bunks ; OLD SWAMP is trying to bake slap-jacks in a frying-pan.*

Joe. [Trying to mend boot with fork.] I say, Old Swamp, I'm savage as a meat-ax—ain't breakfast most ready. The lizards have been licking their chops the last hour.

Old Swamp. [Trying to turn a cake in the pan.] Swallow a piece of your boot, Joe, to keep your stomach. This is the last we've got, any how, and unless Pike gets back pretty soon, you'll have a chance to girt up, Indian fashion, unless you're good at catching rats.

Joe. Traps are all broke—powder gone—and rats shy and half starved, Old Swamp. Have to go it on fried boots.

Old Swamp. Leetle too much cold water in this batter—the cakes don't get done brown, and don't turn easy.

Joe. Put a little whisky in 'em, Old Swamp—they'll soon turn over on their own hook.

Old Swamp. Pshaw! the Judge and Stokes drank up the last drop—not enough left te wet your eye. No matter—the cakes will go further half cooked.

Stokes. [At the wash tub.] Judge, I see you are on the bench—what case is on the docket for to-day?

Judge. [Mending a very ragged pair of pants.] Action for rents—an old suit—parties trying to compromise.

Stokes. What's the prospect, Judge?

Judge. [Holds up the pants.] Doubtful whether the parties agree. I can see through the hole, but the parties may trick anon for a new trial—they're trying to patch it up somehow.

Stokes. How is the evidence?

Judge. Strong on one side—and a good deal of re-button testimony will be required to uphold the suit. Old Swamp, I want to examine you.

Old Swamp. Want me to swear, Judge?

Judge. No, no—you swear wickedly enough every day to answer any court in the mines.

Old Swamp. Then you won't take me up for contempt?

Judge. Not if you go according to Bacon.

Old Swamp. I've been on bacon the last fifteen minutes, and it's the last piece in the cabin; there isn't grease enough in the bone to fry itself—but it will go further half cooked.

Judge. Stand aside—such testimony won't pay my fees—you'll starve judge, jury, and all the parties out.

Old Swamp. Have to stay proceedings for want of grease to grease the griddle. It's a fact—we can't go on much longer.

Stokes. [*Who is washing a shirt—sleeves rolled up.*] The question of ways and means is before the house.

Joe "Hark! from the tombs a doleful sound."

Stokes. Mr. Speaker—I call the gentleman to order, A thorough renovation is necessary to our larder, gentlemen; our stores have been consumed; the relentless rats—

Joe. Two legged rats, Mr. Speaker.

Stokes. I call the gentleman to order. The bill which I am about to offer to the house will have a soaporific effect upon the shirt bosoms of my constituents.

Joe. Hope I shan't have to pay the gentleman's bill, Mr. Speaker; too much liquor in it for a temperance man.

Stokes. I say, Mr. Speaker, my bill will have a soaparific effect.

Judge. On the bowels, man—on the bowels. Hang your law and legislation for spare diet; empty stomachs require strong tonics and stimulants.

Old Swamp. Not pork enough left to stimulate the stomach of a horned toad—only a mouthful left.

Joe. Enough for a taste all round. Tie a string to it—swallow it and pull it back again—and so let it go around; you'll all have a taste, and a grand operation will be produced.

Judge. I object to such practice in my court; some knave of a lawyer will bite the string off, and the bacon will be teetotally incarcerated.

Stokes. Mr. Speaker—the gentleman's plan is ingenious, but will not apply to all cases. Some of my constituents have throats that no string can fathom, if I may judge by the streams of fluid running down.

Joe. Dam them up, then, by tieing a string tight outside.

Old Swamp. Don't be afraid, boys—if worse comes to worst, we'll mend the traps and go it on rats; I'm great on trappin.

Joe. O, for a friccased rat. Here, Old Swamp, fry that—[*throws his boot out*—don't cook it quite done, it will go further; it has already gone several miles.

[*Sings.*] O, Susannah, don't you cry for me—
I'm eating up my boots in Californiie.

Judge. Hark! there's a noise at the door.

Joe. Some poor devil coming to beg a breakfast—I shall have to divide my boot with him. Old Swamp, don't cook it done—'twill go farther.

Old Swamp. Boys, it's Pike; I know the tramp—it's Pike and the jackass. Plenty to eat now.

Enter PIKE and JONES.

All. Huzzah! for Pike—huzza! for Short-Tail, slapjacks and molasses! Pork and beans now, and no mistake.

Pike. I'm glad to see you, boys. Thar's no place like home arter all, with plenty of hog and hominy—hoe cake and possum fat.

Old Swamp. Two days over time, Pike. We concluded the diggers

were on your trail, and that you had fell into the stomach of a digger squaw like a roasted caterpillar.

Pike. Never fell into a woman's bosom as deep as that in all my life. Devil to pay with Short-Tail; got rid by a witch; took the stampede; rolled down hill, and finally, Short-Tail and I got into the editor business, and picked up a printer man, who was mighty near struck off; had'n't ate a mouthful in a month, and the way he pitched into the bacon and brandy was like a greenhorn on his first day's work. Here he is, boys—let him dig for himself now.

Jones. I'm like a licked politician, gentlemen—nothing to say. but keep up a devil of a thinking. My long primer was about run out, and if Pike had'n't come along I should'n't have had an index by this time.

Old Swamp. A miner's latch string is always out—pull, and the door of his heart, as well as his cabin will open to distress. We'll divide our last biscuit with you.

Judge. We will share such as we have with you.

Stokes. I vote aye to that.

Joe. Old Swamp, cook t'other boot now—well done and plenty of gravy.

Jones. No abbreviations or periods to my thanks, gentlemen—I am an exclamation—not a single leaded column in my heart.

Pike. Thar, Bill Jones, did'n't I tell you so? Depend upon it, ef thar's a mean streak in a man so long [*measures the top of his finger*], it's bound to come out of him in California, and ef he has got a good streak, he can't keep it in no how you can fix it.* Boys, do you know what this is? [*Holds up the petticoat.*]

Old Swamp. You've been stealing a white shirt, Pike.

Stokes. It's a long petition on parchment, for the relief of widows—grass widows, Mr. Speaker.

Joe. No, no, its a table cloth to eat fried boots on.

[*PIKE gets into it.*]

Judge. It's a petticoat, by heavens! O Blackstone, what revolution is at hand?

Miners. A petticoat! a petticoat! Huzza! huzza!

Old Swamp. What female woman have you murdered to get that skin?

Pike. Do you s'pose I'd kill a woman to get her petticoat? I'd rather destroy a dozen petticoats to get one live woman, you varmints—and you know it, you do. I hope I may never strike a lead if the animal did'n't give it to me with her own hands.

Stokes. You've robbed some washerwoman's clothes line in Sacramento.

Pike. Nary time, old fellow. Hav'nt been near a clothes line since my mother wallopped me with one for drowning kittens in the wash tub. The fact ar, the animal who owns this skin is at the top of the hill, and sends this by Short-Tail, with her compliments, and hopes you'll help her down.

* The actual expression of a young Pike County man to the author.

Old Swamp. A rael live woman comin to the Mines—unpossible!

Pike. As true as yer born, boys. Short-Tail and I fotched her ourselves—she put the devil into the mule tho'.

Joe. The millenium has come!

Pike. No, it's only a woman.

Joe. Let's eat breakfast in a hurry, and go and tote her into town.

Judge. D——n the breakfast, boys—let us go and get a sight of her before the dew carries her off.

Stokes. Slapjacks and molasses would be worse than emetics now. Let's hear from you, old minister—what do you say?

Old Swamp. [*Slowly, and with emphasis.*] Joe, take down that fiddle and rosin the bow.

Joe. [*Jumps after it.*] It's in tune, and if it aint it's no matter.

Old Swamp. Now, boys, remember you had mothers onsets—don't make fools of yourselves, but make a carcle. [*They circle around PIKE.*] Now, Joe, give us Hail Columby, Star Spangled, Yankee Doodle, and Rory O'More all at onset! and, boys, let your legs go prospecting as if the richest kind of a lead was before you. Try your boots, boys—try your boots. [*Plays a lively air; miners dance merrily around PIKE in a grotesque manner.*]

Pike. [*Unable to contain himself, dances inside the ring, crowing.*] Cock-a-doodle-doo-oo-oo!

[*JOE becomes too much excited to play, and capers about without music.*]

Stokes. Hello! we've danced the fiddle into the negative. Old Swamp, take it up where Joe left off.

Old Swamp. [*Sings.*]

A petticoat flag is the miner's delight—
It awakens sweet thoughts of our mothers at home;
Our sweethearts and wives to dear memory bright:
All the girls we will welcome whenever they come.

Now, boys, get your rifles and pistols—Joe, hand me the whisky bottle. Form line, boys—form line; go it in millintary order. Joe, give us General Washington's most particular grand march. [*Joe plays.*] Shoulder arms! forard march.

Miners. Huzza! huzza for a "live woman in the mines." [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII.—*The top of the hill.* MINERS enter, L., before the tent—give a cheer and fire a salute; MARY screams inside, and JOHN rushes out alarmed.

John. Good heavens, gentlemen! what is the matter?

Miners. Old Swamp! Old Swamp!

Old Swamp. [*Gets up on a rock.*] Stranger, we were white men onst; it seems like a very long time ago—but we have a tradition that some of us wore white shirts and short beards, but it is so long, I don't vouch for it. It has been handed down to us, by various letters through the post office, that we war born into the world, and that our mothers were live female women. It is so long since we have seen a woman, that we don't exactly know what they are, but the doctor

here says a woman is a female man of the human *specie*. Pike County Jess showed us a skin of a strange animal, and swears it belongs to a female woman of the human specie; he says, too, that you have caught the animal, and had her alive on exhibition. Now, stranger, we want to take a look at the thing, and I pledge you my honor we won't stam pede her.

John. Ha! ha! ha! gentlemen—well, this is a droll specimen of the mines—yes, I have caught such an animal—rather rabid, but if you will risk the consequences, I'll show her up.

Old Swamp. We'll take the chances—trot her out—trot her out.

[*Exit JOHN into the tent.*]

Enter JOHN and MARY.

Miners. Huzza for "a live woman in the mines!" Huzza for our mothers, our wives and sweethearts at home!

Pike. Huzza for Carolina Elizabeth Martin!—commonly known as High Betty Martin—that's my gal, it is.

Miners. Huzza! Huzza!

Mary. Gentlemen, I thank you for your kind reception—may I be able to make you some return?

Old Swamp. Hi! gal! won't you sew the buttons on our pants? won't you make light bread and bunkum hoe-cake? won't you make good gruel for a sick miner? won't you make us wear white shirts of a Sunday, and help Pike make poetry and me sarmons?

Mary. Indeed, I'll do all I can for you, I'm sure. O, John, when we were starving in Sacramento, we little thought of finding such warm hearted friends in the mines!

Old Swamp. Friends, gal? why we'd all be fathers and mothers brothers and sisters to you. Boys, a drink all round! here, gal—beauty before age. [*hands her the bottle; she drinks from it.*] Now, boys, strike the tent. [*Tent is taken down.*] Make a chair for the gal, two o' ye. [*They make a chair by clasping hands.*] Three cheers for the first "live woman in the mines."

[*Cheers.*]

Joe. Three cheers for the first white man who brought his wife to the mines.

Pike. And three cheers for High Betty Martin, who's coming to the mines.

[*The MINERS seat MARY between them; others shoulder JOHN; JOE strikes up a march; PIKE raises the petticoat for a flag as they march out. Curtain on picture.*]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Deep Gulf.—Hillsides rocky and steep, and covered with undergrowth. An emigrant wagon a little in the back ground.*

Enter BETSEY and SLUICE, L. U. E.

Betsey. Sluice, whar ar we ?

Sluice. According to the best of my judgment, we are here.

Betsey. Lord, Sluice ! any fool knows that. But whar's our wharabouts ?

Sluice. In a devilish deep gulch, in my opinion.

Betsey. How are we to get out of it ?

Sluice. I don't know, unless we wait till the world gets upside-down, and fall out.

Betsey. Aint thar no eend to it ?

Sluice. Yes, one end has a perpendicular fall over the rocks an hundred feet—the other end has'nt any beginning, so far as I can see.

Betsey. What on airth did we come down for ?

Sluice. I don't know any other reason than by the force of gravitation, and woman's will. I told you we had better head the gulch, and go around it ; but no, down you would come, over rocks and bushes, and now you are like a rat in a trap—can't neither back out nor go further. Now you see where woman's will has brought you to.

Betsey. I don't care a snap, Bill Sluice. I was'nt going six miles around to make half a mile—I go it on short cuts, I do.

Sluice. Well, we shall go it on short cuts now, for it won't take long to starve to death here.

Betsey. Who talks of starving to death ? If you are so easily discouraged, you'd better go back to Sacramento, and practice in the Round Tent.

Sluice. I had rather starve to death with you.

Betsey. Good. If worse comes to worse, we'll pack the cattle, leave the wagon, and work our way to Stringtown.

Sluice. And leave Uncle Joe sick to be eaten up by the wolves.

Betsey. No, no, no—that won't do—no, never. You shall go to Stringtown, hunt up Jess, bring him here, and then we'll take our wagon to pieces, carry it up the hill wheel at a time, shoulder Uncle Joe, drive the cattle up, put the wagon together, and—whoa ! haw ! Berry, who's afraid ?

Sluice. A woman's wit, a woman's wit for ever ! It's a pity you was'nt a man.

Betsey. Why, Sluice ?

Sluice. You'd make a capital general. You would have fought your way through Mexico as well as General Taylor, without men, money or provisions.

Betsey. I should need better soldiers than you, then.

Sluice. Can't I shoot—can't I fight—can't I dig ?

Betsey. Yes, and you can lay in the gutter like a loafer.

Sluice. Um ! [*Groans.*] That's ungenerous.

Betsey. Pshaw! you draw a close sight, but you can't stand grief—you're like a faithful dog—can fight well, but want somebody to set you on. You'd make a good soldier, but a poor general.

Sluice I give it up—there is no use in disputing with a woman. Let her have her own way, and its all sunshine—contradict her, and a thunder storm raises directly. Well, general, what is to be done?

Betsey. Put a piece of bread and bacon in your pocket, shoulder your rifle, and go out on a scout, and see if thar's any place to get our wagon out. I'll stand guard over the cattle and Uncle Joe, and mind, don't you come back without finding a trail—d'ye hear?

Sluice. [*Going.*] I'm gone.

Betsey. Stop!

Sluice. I'm stopped.

Betsey. Whar's your rifle?

Sluice. In the wagon.

Betsey. Get it. Never stir from your camp in a wild country without your arms. Suppose you meet an Indian, or a grizzly—what show would you have for your own skin?

Sluice. Right again, general. The fact is, if California is ever invaded by an enemy, with a regiment of Pike county women we can defy the devil.

[*Gets his rifle, and exit.*]

Betsey. [*Sitting down on a rock.*] O, dear, what trouble I have in hunting up a man—come two thousand miles, and havn't found him yet; ef it had been any body else but Jess I'd seen all the men hung first, afore I'd wore out so much shoe leather in running arter 'em! Ef it hadn't been for him I'd have been hoein corn and pulling flax on the plantation now, instead of climbing these hills. These pesky men do bother our heads so orfully when they do get in; thar's no gettin along without one—and after all thar isn't one in an hundred that's worth the trouble they give us. Then, like a flea, thar's no sartinty of catching one—for just as yer get yer finger on him, like as any way he's hoppin off arter somebody else. Let me catch Jess hoppin arter somebody else. Giminy! wouldn't I give him jessie?—wouldn't I crack him? O, Jess, Jess—you run arter somebody else! O, murder! O, ef he should? O! O! [*Weeps.*] I'm a poor, lone, lorn woman—Uncle Joe sick—lost in the mountains—and Jess, my Jess, to serve me so! My courage is gone—my boots worn out—wagon tire getting loose—my best har comb broke—all a trying to find a man, and him to use me so. [*Weeps.*] It will break my heart! O! O! O! [*A gun shot is heard.*] Ha! [*Springs up and listens.*] Sluice in trouble? [*Forgets her lamentation instantly; runs to the wagon and seizes a rifle.*] Keep still, Uncle Joe—ef thar's danger I'm ready for it.

Enter SLUICE, running.

Betsey. What is it, Sluice—what is it?

Sluice. O, nothing in particular—no harm done yet—can't say what may come.

Betsey. Let it come, Sluice; only give us a fair chance for a skirmage.

Sluice. I was picking my way through the chapparel, when I dis-

covered fresh digger tracks, and I thought some of the Indians were lurking about to stampede our cattle. Directly I got a glimpse of one of the rascals, and I thought I'd give him leave to quit, so I just put a ball through the top of his hair, and such an almighty yell you never heard, and such a scratching of gravel you never saw, for the black devil ran as if a young earthquake was at his heels—I didn't hurt him though, only gave him a hint to move his boots.

Betsey. That's right; never take human life except in self-defence. Ef *they'll* let us alone, we will let *them*. Glad it's no worse. Did you find a chance to get the wagon out?

Sluice. Yes, I found a side ravine, and by taking the point I think we can get the wagon up—it's a tight squeeze though, for it's a little less than a perpendicular.

Betsey. We'll go it on the perpendicular then, and go it clar. As for staying here I shan't do it, so thar. [*To herself.*] And ef I do find Jess in cahoot with any live woman, won't I wake snakes and peel his skin. [*Exit, and is heard behind the scenes.*] Whoa—haw Buck! Gee up, Berry!

SCENE II.—*Exterior of Log Cabin.*

Enter JOHN and MARY. MARY with a broom.

Mary. [R.] Well, Mr. Storekeeper, how do you sell beans to-day?

John. [L.] By the pound, generally, Mrs. Express Man.

Mary. Ha! ha! I didn't know but you sold them by the yard—are you sure that you know beans?

John. I profess an acquaintance with them when they are well baked—think I can tell a bean from a broomstick, madam.

Mary. [*Raising her broom, threatening good naturedly.*] Perhaps I had better test your knowledge.

John. No, no—not now; try me on beans first.

Mary. Well, weigh me out five pounds, then, for dinner.

John. Got the dust to pay for them? No credit here—pay as you go.

Mary. [*Raising her broom.*] I'll raise a dust for you if you don't get the beans—no beans, no dinner!

John. How sharp you are—you shall have the beans.

Mary. And you'll be sharp enough, too, when the beans are cooked.

John. I'll try to get my pay, any how.

Mary. No fear of that, for you already have a miner's appetite.

John. Nothing better than our pure mountain air for that.

Mary. O, John, we are so happy, now! everybody is so kind to us—all are so good natured. Why, I never was happier in my life—and it is so much better here than starving in the city!

John. I never knew I was good for anything till I came here.

Mary. Nor I, either; now I know I am worth beans. Ha! ha!

John. Circumstances make men—aye, and women, too—and if we are only willing to help ourselves, why, in due time—in miner's language—we may strike a lead.

Mary. True—and we have struck the lead—let us follow it. The kind-hearted boys have set us up in business, and scarcely ever seem satisfied unless when they are doing something to help us on.

John. God bless them! Any package for me in your department, madam Express Man?

Mary. Yes, an empty pail and an ax; I want the charges paid.

John. Pail and ax—charges! what are the charges?

Mary. Fill the pail at the spring—cut an armful of wood—and get five pounds of beans.

John. Charges outrageous! I'll forfeit the packages!

Mary. If you do, you'll forfeit your dinner—take your choice—can't cook beans without water and fire.

John. And I can't eat beans without being cooked; I'll take the pail and pay the charges. No getting ahead of a woman, I see.

Mary. And be quick, John, dear, for the express will be in soon, and you know what a throng we shall have around us. By the way, I found two letters in the box, this morning, addressed to me.

John. Two letters? Somebody making love to you, I suppose, already.

Mary. Yes, indeed—is that any business of yours? [*Playfully.*]

John. I suppose not, in California, where women do business on their own account, independent of their husbands. Still, I might be just the least bit in the world jealous.

Mary. And with some reason, John—for if they are not love letters, they are loves of letters.

John. I'm all curiosity—besides, I wan't to know who I've got to shoot.

Mary. No doubt! Well, here they are—read them.

[*Handing him the letters.*]

John. They look as if they had been written with a pick or shovel, rather than a pen.

[*Reads.*]

"For and in consideration of mending pants, sewing on buttons and patching shirts, and trying to make an old man happy by sundry kindnesses—know all men and female women by these here presents: I hereby sell and make over to Mary Wilson, my half interest in claim No. 10—situate, lying and being on Whisky Bar, Feather River diggings, State of Californy, United States of Ameriky—for her whole soul's benefit and behoof, and her husband hasn't anything to do with it." (The deuce he hasn't—setting up for yourself without advertising, are you?) "And I agree to prospect her said claim with pick, shovel and pump, clear to the bed rock, free gratis for nothing, from date."—AMBROSE SWAMP.

Shan't shoot old Swamp for that. [*Opens the other.*] Poetry, eh? this must be a love letter in earnest.

[*Reads.*]

"I, Jessie Jenkins by name,
Give Mary Wilson my half claim—
Know'd as number ten
By all the mining men—
Which I, in cahoot
With that ar old brute
Call'd Swamp, on Whisky bar-

Hopin she may clar
 Ten thousand dollars on sight.
 To which I subscribe my hand write
 With a pen like a pole—
 And may the Lord have mercy on your soul."

JESS JENKINS,
 Known as Pike County Jess.—Amen.

Ha! ha! ha! Shan't shoot Pike for that—God bless him! Ah!
 Mary, Mary, if you havn't fallen in love with the boys, I have; they
 are doing so much for us, I—I can't— [Affected.

[Post horn is heard.

Mary. Ah! here is the express rider; hurry, John—hurry.

[He takes the pail and ax and goes out.

Enter EXPRESS RIDER with his bags.

Express Rider. Up to time and a leetle ahead, madam. Run the gauntlet between a pack of cayotees, three grizzlies, and a whole tribe of Digger Indians—killed two horses and jumped a ledge an hundred feet—hung myself by the heels in the bushes—turned forty somersets down a canon—slept three nights on a snow bank—froze three legs stiff, had 'em amputated and climbed the hill next morning on crutches, and have brought lots of letters for the boys, and newspapers for the old ones. Please take the bags, and give me a glass of brandy and water without any water in it.

Mary. Ha! ha! ha! Merry as an express man yet, I see. Well, come in, come in—we have always something for you.

[MARY goes to the express counter.

Enter MINERS, L., hastily, as if running from their work. Half a dozen voices at once.

Miners. Any letters for me? Have I got a letter?

Mary. Wheugh! wheugh! One at a time—one at a time—can't look for all at once!

Old Swamp. Form a line, boys—form a line; give the gal a chance.

1st Miner. I'll give five dollars for a letter!

2d Miner. I'll give ten—only give me a letter!

Old Swamp. Form line, boys, or you'll never get a letter. [They range in line.] Now, gal, look for me.

Mary. [Looking over the letters, calls out.] Ambrose Swamp.

[Hands him a letter.

Old Swamp. Glory! here's five dollars.

[Takes the letter and is going off.

Mary. It's only a dollar—here's the change.

Old Swamp. O, d——n the change—keep it, gal—the letter's from Betsey and the children.

1st Miner. Jonathan Sims!

Mary. No letter for Jonathan Sims.

1st Miner. [Passing on.] Go to thunder with your express—I won't strike a blow to-day—I'll get drunk.

2d Miner. Roswell Rattail.

Mary. No letter for Roswell Rattail.

Stokes. William Stokes.

Mary. Letter for William Stokes.

[Hands it.

Stokes. Petitioner's prayer has been granted, and bill passed, Mr. Speaker. [Throwing his purse on the counter.] Take out an ounce, madam, never mind details. [Turns off to read his letter, leaving the purse.

Judge. Edward Smaile.

Mary. Letter for Edward Smaile.

Judge. [Sings and dances.] Fol lol de riddle lol rol lol lol. [Throws down money.] D——n the change. Boys, what'll you drink? I'll treat the whole crowd.

Pike. Jessie Jenkins, commonly known as Pike County Jess.

Mary. Sorry to say no letter for Pike.

Pike. No letter! I'll give that gal, High Betty Martin, the sack, by all the weasles that wear a skin, I will. No letter! I'll go and whip Short-Tail out of spite, I will.

Joe. Joseph Nudge.

Mary. No letter for Joseph Nudge.

Joe. No letter? Hav'nt heard from home in a year. Don't believe I've got any friends in America. D——n the luck—I'll emigrate to the North Pole, and fish for grizzlies through the ice.

[Others are passing in dumb show—some receiving letters, some none—some getting newspapers, and ranging themselves around—some sitting on the floor, some leaning against the wall, reading their letters and papers. OLD SWAMP is in the fore ground, leaning against the wall, reading his letter, and wiping his eyes.

Mary. Package for Old Swamp.

Old Swamp. [Still absorbed with his letter.] Anan!

Mary. Pass it over to him. [PIKE takes it, and puts it in his hand.

Pike. Here, old fellow. Why—why, Old Swamp, you're cryin—bad news from home?

Old Swamp. [Struggling with emotion.] N—no; all well, thank God. What's this? [Holding up the package.

Pike. Don't know—reckon it's a dogeretype; peel the skiu off and see.

Old Swamp. [Tears off the paper, and opens it.] It's my Betsey, and Jennie, and Bill! [Looks at it a moment—kisses it, much affected.] My wife! my children! O, if I could fly, wouldn't I be with you! O, the misery of separation! My wife, my children, my home! [Bursts into tears. MINERS gather round respectfully—MARY comes and takes his hand kindly.

Mary. My father, there are better days coming—joy shall yet lighten your path, and home and happiness shall be yours again. Courage, my good father. You labor here to make them independent at home, and your love for them, and your present self-denial surely will be rewarded. You will yet be happy together.

Old Swamp. [Still affected.] God bless you, gal. [Struggling with

his feelings.] I'm an old fool. Somehow, women always get on the soft side of me. [*With fervor.*] I've got the best wife, the best children—thar—thar—read—read it aloud. [*Hands MARY the letter.*

Mary. [*Reads.*] "My dear husband :—I received your draft for one thousand dollars safe. I didn't know exactly what to do to get the money, so I took it up to Squire Gibbs. If you had seen him when he looked at the draft—I never saw a politer man—he actually sot a chair for me. 'Did your old man send all this to you? Why, I'll take it, and give you the cash.' I tell you I felt proud of my old man that blessed minute, and I wish I could put my arms about his neck, and if you will come home, I will, and Bill and Jennie will—but you had better not come, for you will be kissed to death. Didn't I feel rich with all that money—I was afraid I should lose it before I got home, but I didn't. I went right off, and paid up the mortgage on our place, then I paid the store debt, then the shoemaker, and everybody else, and I had nigh an hundred dollars left, and we didn't owe a dime in the world, and I felt so happy that I sat down and cried—I don't care, I cried like a child. The children thought we were so rich that we needn't take in washing any more, but I told them father might have bad luck, so we must keep at work and save all we could. Bill said he'd bring water, and Jennie said she'd pound the clothes, but I told the darlings they should go to school, for my heart was light enough to do all the work. Bill says he'll never owe nothing to nobody, and he will work for father and mother when they get old, and they needn't work at all. We all talk about you every night, and want to see you right bad. Dear husband, let the Californy chunks go, and come home to your chunks here. We send a thousand kisses."

Old Swamp. Aint sich a wife and children worth workin for, boys?

Miners. Three cheers for Old Swamp and his wife at home!

Pike. Three cheers for High Betty—no, nary cheer, the gal didn't write me a letter to-day. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Front Wood Glen.*

Enter CASH and DICE, L.

Dice. A pretty mess, we've made of it, Cash. Do you know where we are?

Cash. I know we have got clear of the harpies of the law, and that is all I care for till the thing is blown over a little.

Dice. We've had a lucky escape—but what made you shoot that fellow?

Cash. Shoot him? who wouldn't have shot him rather than lost the money? Everything was going right till the fellow saw me turn up the wrong card. The fact was, the wax on my fingers had worn smooth, and my thumb slipped, and he saw the trick. He accused me of cheating, and grabbed the money. Of course I wouldn't stand that, so I put a bullet through him, grabbed the money, and pnt out through the back door before the police could arrest me.

Dice. You hadn't much time to spare, for a hornet's nest was raised in less than ten minutes.

Cash. That ten minutes saved me, for I ran to the slough, and, as luck would have it, I found a boat, and in two minutes I was in the chapparel on the other side, made my way to the American, swam that, and was safe in our rendezvous till you came.

Dice. Well, it will blow over in a month, so we can go back again.

Cash. Yes, no trouble about that, for who cares about a miner? They're only fair game for gamblers and lawyers to pluck. The only difference is, we win their money honorably, while the lawyers steal it by law.

Dice. And if there is any fuss, why, we can buy up law, lawyers, judges, witnesses, and jurymen. The only trouble is, it may cost something to prove an alibi, or buy up straw bail.

Cash. Exactly; and if they put us in jail, for form's sake, why, it is not much trouble to break out by getting on the right side of the jailor.

Dice. We'll have a little play-spell now by going on to some of the Bars, and prospecting in the pockets of miners at home. They work and we win.

Cash. Right, old fellow. I had rather have a dozen lucky miners at my table than a whole plantation of niggers—I'll make more out of them, and if, now and then, one gets rapped over the head for being too lucky, who cares—whose business is it?

Dice. Good. Well, pnsh ahead—we'll see where this trail leads to.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.—*Stringtown.* PIKE and SWAMP digging on MARY'S claim, in the fore ground—MINERS at work in the distance.

Old Swamp. Thar, Pike, we're comin to gravel, and the dirt looks right.

[*Examines.*]

Pike. Mary's claim may turn out a good egg, arter all. Old Swamp, I love that gal.

Old Swamp. It's lucky High Betty Martin don't hear you say that—she'd be in your hair worse nor a steel trap into a hairy coon.

Pike. Geet out, you old varmint. My gal knows I'm true as steel to her. She knows that every gal I love is for her sake, and you know too that I don't want to stampede Mary Wilson.

Old Swamp. Humph! I'd trust you about as far as I would a fox with a goose, and your gal wouldn't trust you at all.

Pike. Pooh! make it up in a minute—Californy gals mighty forgiving. A leetle soft sodder, a trifle of honey, and fair promises, and they'll pull the wool over their own eyes, kiss, and forgive.

Old Swamp. But they don't forget, eh? I'd like to know, Pike, how on airth sich an ungainly varmint as you are made out to catch any gal.

Pike. Ha! ha! ha! Aint I a beauty—aint I a roarer, a perfect wild bull, on the prairie? Why, the gal don't live on air and hoe cake that kin stand the glance of my eye. We were at a huskin frolic. When it come to the hoe dig, I pulled High Betty Martin on to the floor for a double shuffle breakdown. O, I'm death on the toe and heel. Well, Bill Sampson steps up, and swore he'd dance with my gal fust, and he gin me a push. He mought as well have tried to up-

set a steamboat. "Hold on," says I, Bet sees fair play, and I pitched into the varmint, worse nor a gang of niggers into a cotton field. "Go your death, boys," shouted Betty—"I don't care which whips—but, Jess Jenkins, if you don't lick him, I'll lick you." In just two minutes by the watch, Bill Sampson was the worst-licked man in the Settlement, and he owned up that he thought a young airthquake had hold on him. I popped the question to the gal that very night, and she caved like a young possum—said I was the boy for her beauty. Cock-a-doodle-doo!

Old Swamp. What made you fall in love with her?

Pike. I seed her lift a barrel of whiskey plump and square out of the cart on to the ground. I thought the gal what could do that could manage niggers as well as make gingerbread, and I didn't sleep a wink for three nights for thinking of her.

Enter JONES, R.

Here comes the printer man. Well, old fellow, got your press a-going?

Jones. No; haint dug enough to set up a *form*, nor made money enough to buy the types to set it up with. Have to start for Humbug again.

Pike. Can't you rig out a printing machine on a sluice box, and make it go on the undershot principle? I'm great on machine poetry—can't you be great on machine printing?

Jones. O yes; no trouble about that; the printing machine would be about equal to your poetry, but then there would be the devil to pay.

Pike. The devil? what's he got to do with your machine, or my poetry?

Jones. A good deal—every printer has his devil.

Pike. Well, I know they're as saucy as the devil, but I didn't know they always kept one on hand.

Jones. Always, Pike—and they've got stomachs to fill—you've heard of a man being as hungry as the devil—that means the printer's devil.

Pike. Yes, I saw you in the same fix onst, and didn't you pitch in?

Jones. Pretty much as I did into a turkey dinner once.

Old Swamp. How's that?

Jones. * Bought a splendid turkey once, to give the devil, and all the other office imps a grand dinner. Fed him four times a day for six weeks, and when the old sinner got so fat he couldn't stand, I cut his head off, pulled out his feathers, stuffed him with gingerbread and oysters, and hung him outside the house to freeze him tender. Went out next morning to bring him in to roast, and found he had given me the slip, leaving a card that read "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

Pike. What! a dead turkey run away? Must have been of the Shanghai breed, and crowed his legs off the nail.

Jones. Some hungry devil stole the turkey, and left nothing but the joke for us.

* A literal fact.

Old Swamp. And your guests?

Jones. O, made it up on bacon and eggs, only there wasn't any eggs, and the bacon was boiled codfish.

Enter CHINAMAN, L., much alarmed.

Chinaman. Me help! me help! shooty me! bang me shooty! one, tree, five hundred Indian! O! O! O!

Pike. Shoot you, bang you, two or three hundred Indians? What the devil do you want with so many Indians?

Chinaman. No, no, no! Pop! bang! bullet shooty me!

Old Swamp. Indians shoot you?

Chinaman. Gold prospect, me hill over. Par one dolar—one dolar, two bit—one dollar half. Indian come! me bang! bang! bullet! pop me! two, tree, five hundred!

Pike. Hey! Indians coming to the Settlement? we must look to it.

Old Swamp. That ar a fact. Rally the boys; call all hands; we must drive them back.

Pike. [*Shouts.*] Indians, boys, Indians! Hurrah for a fight! Fun, boys, fun—drop your tools, and run, boys, run.

MINERS rush in, with their arms.

Old Swamp. The Diggers are upon us, boys—let's meet them on the hill and surprise them

Pike. And lick them before they have a chance to scalp Short-Tail.

[*All rush out, except CHINAMAN, with a "Huzzah!"*]

Chinaman. Chinaman no fight; Chinaman skin good skin; keep him so. Mellican man big devil—no hurty bullet him.

SCENE V.—*Top of the Hill.*

Enter BETSEY, with boots in her hand, and SLUICE.

Sluice. Here's a trail that leads somewhere, and by the lay of the land, Feather River must be at the bottom of the gulch.

Betsey. I'm glad on't. I've worn out one pair of good boots in hunting up a man, [*throws down boots,*] I wouldn't give another pair for the best man alive, except Jess.

Sluice. Well, let us go a little higher on the Ridge to ascertain our position. Stringtown cannot be very far off. [*They walk up the stage.*]

Enter PIKE, SWAMP, and party, R.

Pike. The varmints can't be far off, boys. Stay here—tracks—boots, too. They've killed somebody and stole their clothes—squat, boys, squat! lay low till I take a peep. [*All lay or squat down.*]

Old Swamp. Hold, Pike—there's two of 'em. [*Pointing to SLUICE and BETSEY.*] Squat, boys, squat!

[*BETSEY and SLUICE advance slowly.*]

Pike. Cock your pieces, boys—don't fire till I give the word. Swamp and I will take them two—as fast as you fire drop down and load. Old Swamp, I'll take that tall squaw—you take the buck. [*PIKE and SWAMP crouch behind a tree, as BETSEY and SLUICE advance.*] Are you ready, Swamp? say the word. [*Taking aim.*]

O. Swamp. Stay, Pike! that's a white woman.

Pike. No; it's a d——d squaw.

O. Swamp. I swear it's a woman.

Pike. [Looking close.] Boys, it's a fact—they are humans from the settlements—get up, and three cheers for another live woman in the mines.

[MINERS rise and cheer.]

Betsey. [Drawing a knife and pistol, in alarm, rushes towards PIKE, as if to shoot him.] You varmints! do you mean to harm a woman?

Pike. Snakes and alligators! That's Betsey—whoo-ra! whoo-ra!

Betsey. Jess—Jess—my Jess, is it you?

[They rush into each other's arms.]

Pike. Boys, it's my own blessed High Betty Martin herself, it is.

Miners. [Shout.] Hurrah for High Betty Martin and Pike County Jess—Short-Tail and all!

Pike. Why, Betty, I hope I may be shot if I didn't take you for a digger squaw; I was going to shoot you.

Betsey. May I never pull another acre of flax ef I didn't take you for a robber; I was going to knife you.

Old Swamp. Ha! ha! One looks like a squaw, and the other like a robber, sure enough; but so long as the heart is in the right place, it's no matter.

Pike. Well, boys, we'll let the diggers go—the Chinaman was more scared than hurt. [To Betsey.] Somebody shot at one of the Johns, and he thought a tribe of Indians was on his trail.

Betsey. Ha! ha! ha! It was Sluice, thar. He thought he saw an Indian through the bushes, and fired his rifle to scare him off. It's done no harm, and only brought us together sooner.

Old Swamp. It's the first time I ever knowed gunpowder to act as a messenger of love.

Betsey. Well, Sluice—bring up the wagon—I've found the man, and let the boots be hanged. [Exit all, laughing and cheering, L. 1 E.]

SCENE VI.—*Inside of a Miner's Store—Miners lounging around. CASH and DICE seated at a table with a Monte Bôx.*

Dice. Come, boys, here's a chance for a fortune. Never say die with the money in hand. Come down, boys, come down. [Miners gather around the table—some throw money on the table.] Down, boys—any more? all down? [Draws the cards.] King—ace—knave in the door. Bank wins.

[Cash scrapes it up.]

Enter OLD SWAMP as DICE is speaking.

Old Swamp. Knave in the door? A knave is always in the door of a gambler's bank. Boys, you are fools. Doesn't your money come hard enough, that you must throw it away?

Cash. Come down, gentlemen. Fortune to the brave—don't be backward in coming forward—down—down—all down?

Old Swamp. Boys, don't fool away your money. Remember your wives and children at home, save your money for them, don't rob them.

Dice. Bank wins. [Scrapes it up.] Come down, boys—no preaching here, old man—plenty of luck and good liquor. Landlord, six jupils, four brandy smashes, at my expense—all down?

Old Swamp. The varments! I've a mind to break their heads, bank and all, the fools.

Jones. [*Who is reading a paper.*] *Old Swamp*, read this article in the Sacramento paper. [*Hands the paper, pointing to the article.*]

Old Swamp. [*Puts on his spectacles and reads.*] It is as true as I am a living man.

Jones. No mistake, they are the very men.

Old Swamp. Boys, I want to read you a leetle news—rayther important.

Cash. Come down, come down—don't mind the old fool.

Joe. What is it *Old Swamp*?

Miners. Yes, let's hear it.

Old Swamp. Boys, keep your eyes skinned while I read—let no one leave the room.

[*Reads.*]

"PROCLAMATION.—One thousand dollars reward will be paid for the apprehension of a gambler, named Jacob Cash, who committed a brutal murder by shooting a miner named George Doan, on the 17th inst., in Sacramento. Said Cash is about five feet nine or ten inches in height, sandy hair, grey eyes, dark complexion, with a bold address. The murderer was accompanied in his flight by a confederate named Richard Dice, a man about——"

Cash. The devil! Boys, the game is up for to-day. [*Gathers up the money.*] I want to speak with you.

[*To Dice.*]

Old Swamp. Yes, villains, your game is up. Seize them, boys—they are the rascals. [*Miners make demonstrations of taking them.*]

CASH AND DICE rise and draw their pistols.

Dice. The first that moves is a dead man. Gentlemen, it is all a mistake—that is not the man—he is as innocent as I am.

Old Swamp. Very likely. Birds of a feather flock together.

Enter PIKE and BETSEY.

Pike. What's the row, boys—any chance for me to take a hand?

Old Swamp. A murder has been committed in Sacramento—thar stands the murderer. Here's the Governor's proclamation, in black and white, offering a reward of one thousand dollars for his apprehension.

Pike. As sure as I'm a Christian, them's the very varmint who tried to stampede Mary Wilson. Boys, I know the dogs—let's pin 'em.

Cash and Dice. [*Presenting their pistols.*] The first man that stirs gets a bullet in him.

Betsey. [*Leveling her gun.*] Mister, two can play at that game.

Pike. High Betty Martin forever. [*Presents his rifle.*] Shall we shoot first, or will you?

Enter JOHN and MARY.

John. What is this, my friends?—I hope no difficulty among yourselves.

Mary. John, John! there stand the villains who sought to entrap us in Sacramento.

John. The very men. Good heavens! what a strange chance!

Dice. By heavens! the very woman.

[*To CASH.*]

Pike. You've got just one minute to surrender. Ef you don't cave

at onest, we'll make riddles of your carcasses, and send you to the Devil's Monte Bank.

Dice. It's no use—[*to CASH*]*—they're too many. Will you give us the benefit of the law?*

Pike. Law? No—we'll hang you like dogs by miner's law.

Old Swamp. No, boys—'bide the law. If the law will do its duty, 'bide the law. It's time enough to take the law in hand when the authorities become scoundrels—till then, 'bide the law. We'll send them to Sacramento.

Pike. With one condition, I agree to that. Give them the law of Moses first, so that they will not forget Stringtown—"forty lashes save one."

Miners. Agreed! agreed!

Dice. We surrender. Cash, we'll get off easy enough when we get a chance of the law. [*They surrender—and, as they are led out—*

Pike. Make them dance to their own music, boys—a fiddle with one string, and a bow in a strong hand. [*A shout is heard without.*

Enter MINERS, tumultuously—one holding a prospecting pan.

Miners. Mary Wilson! Mary Wilson! Huzza for the "live woman in the Mines!"

John. What is it, boys? I hope you are not going to hang my wife.

Stokes. You be hanged, yourself. Mary Wilson has struck a lead rich—rich as Cræsus! Look—look! piles of gold!

Mary. Mine—is it true? O, heavens!

Old Swamp. Yes, gal—No. 10 is a ten-strike—it's yours, and no mistake. You are rich, gal, but don't get proud.

Mary. O, I am proud—I am proud of your friendship, I am proud of the miners, my friends, I am proud of everything—everybody in the Mines.

Pike. We're all proud of you, and—John Wilson, I shall kiss your wife.

[*Kisses her.*

Betsey. [*Good humoredly.*] Jess, if you kiss that man's-wife, I'll kiss that woman's husband. [*Throws her arms about JOHN, and kisses him heartily.*

Pike. I'm so happy, I could kiss Short-Tail himself, ef it wasn't for stampeding him.

Mary. O, John, are we not well paid for all our trials and misfortunes? How can I ever repay you for your many, many kindnesses?

[*To MINERS.*

Old Swamp. Pshaw! by sewing on our buttons, nursing poor, sick, miners, giving kind words to all, and making us think of and love still better our wives and sweethearts at home, as you have done.

Pike. And by being bridesmaid to my Carolina Betsey, commonly known as High Betty Martin, who is to be spliced to Pike County Jess, by the Judge, this blessed night. [*Advancing to the front of the stage.*] And ef thar's any more female women in these diggings who wants to strike a lead, and go in cahoot with an A No. 1 miner for a husband, she is welcome to Short-Tail to ride on a prospecting tour, to become "A LIVE WOMAN IN THE MINES."

THE END.

Aug. 20, 1857.

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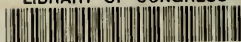
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